

WASHINGTON - U.S. Congressman Allen Boyd (D-North Florida) today helped introduced legislation to reignite economic development in areas of North Florida most impacted by the BP oil spill at this time. The legislation, introduced along with Congressman Jeff Miller (R-North Florida), creates 'economic development zones,' areas where Gulf residents and small businesses will be eligible for tax incentives on bonds, mortgages, pensions and other financing tools. The legislation is modeled after similar legislation passed after Hurricane Katrina struck in 2005.

"The BP oil spill is the greatest environmental catastrophe to strike our shores in history. While this is unquestionable, I believe we must take action now to ensure that it does not also become the greatest economic catastrophe to those living in North Florida," said Congressman Boyd. "That's why I've introduced legislation with my colleague, Jeff Miller, to speed relief to the countless residents, property owners, small businesses and taxpayers that have been economically impacted as a result of the BP oil crisis. This legislation takes strides to reinvigorate economic development projects in our area while at the same time providing tax breaks and tax incentives to those that need it most. For as long as this crisis continues, I will continue looking for opportunities to speed aid and relief to the victims of this tragedy."

The *Gulf Opportunities Zone Act of 2010* will help provide immediate relief to Gulf residents and reinvigorate economic development in North Florida by:

1. Providing **tax-exempt bonds** to facilitate new construction projects and encourage upgrades on existing structures;
2. Allowing small businesses to carry **net operating losses** back for five years instead of two years;
3. Giving select homebuyers the opportunity to receive **below-market mortgage rates** to purchase a home;
4. Increasing the **depreciation deduction** small businesses are allowed to claim per year;
5. **Waiving penalties** for individuals that take early withdrawals from their retirement plans.

[\(To view a complete list of tax breaks and economic incentives included in the legislation, please click here.\)](#)

Currently, the legislation is aimed at providing relief to areas that have experienced the most

economic damage as a result of BP's oil, including Bay, Franklin, Gulf, Okaloosa and Walton counties. As additional regions along the Panhandle are put in greater risk, this legislation could be expanded to aid affected counties as needed.

The *Gulf Opportunities Zone Act of 2010* is the most recent in a number of bills introduced by Congressman Boyd to protect North Florida from the effects of the BP oil spill and ensure that local communities are receiving economic relief as quickly as possible.

Last week, Congressman Boyd introduced legislation that would remove the tax liability from BP claim checks, ensuring that victims of the BP oil spill receive the full amount of damages without having to set aside an amount for their next tax return.

Last month, Congressman Boyd sponsored legislation that would hold oil companies fully accountable for the economic damage caused by oil spills. Oil companies are already responsible for the full cost of environmental clean-up efforts. Boyd's legislation would raise the current cap from \$75 million to \$10 billion, ensuring that oil companies – and not the taxpayers – bear the cost for all economic damages resulting from oil spills.

More information on the BP oil spill crisis and a full account of Congressman Boyd's efforts to protect North Florida can be found at www.boyd.house.gov/oilspill .

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